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The American RECORD GUIDE

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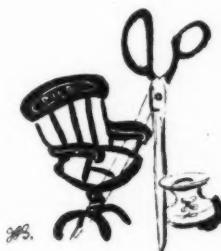
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The American RECORD GUIDE

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Editorial Notes

It is always a pleasure to have a letter from a colleague and friend, particularly when its content can be shared with others. D. L. Julian, who needs no introduction to our readers, writes:

"For some time I have had it in mind to send you a letter regarding your October *Editorial*. It was splendid! In Columbia's price increase I can see only a deferred step in the right direction. I never did think its precipitate price reductions, several years ago, was a wise move. I have always held that *classical* recordings constitute, logically, a *luxury* trade, and that quality of product (with attendant high price level) would be more desirable than questionable mass production at lowered price.

"To do a little 'Sunday morning quarterbacking', it seems to me that a happy solution *could* have been had by imitating the publishing industry along this line: The books of the better authors are presented to the book-buying public in original editions (from \$2.50 upwards), produced or manufactured (I believe the latter is a currently preferable term) by the 'old-line' publishing houses. Then, after a decent interval, if sales are satisfactory, publication rights are assigned to another concern (chiefly the 25-cents 'pocket book' ones), where the wants of a larger, but less exacting market are met. Frequently, there are between the original and the 25-cents editions, intermediate printings, at successively lower prices. Why was not this approach to record publication ever explored?

"Applying the book procedure to recordings might have meant that Victor and Columbia could have specialized upon the top-flight performers only, without the commercial concern of 'reaching the millions', and accepted the profits from dealing with a limited group of buyers *willing to pay*, say, \$2.00 a disc. In turn, depending upon ultimate sales possibilities to a mass market, licensing arrangements with another company could be effected for it to market pressings of cheaper materials, at lower prices, to the wider segment of record purchasers (comprising both those of the small purse and larger appetite, as well as those of larger purse and smaller musical appetite).

"The real advantage of the foregoing scheme to the *music lover* would be that when such a person were decided upon a particular recorded performance, he would be willing to secure the *cheap* edition, for purely trial purposes. Then,

if the particular recording palled on him with time, he would quickly junk it. On the other hand, if he grew to like it very much, he would then be inclined to purchase the *original edition* (of superior quality) as a permanent acquisition to his library.

"It is unfortunately too late now for this sort of thing.

"To turn to another subject upon which I believe you will agree one hundred per cent. There are grave shortcomings to passing judgment on the merits of a recording in a cubicle of a retail store. The ideal alternative that of lending records to a prospective buyer in his home has its drawbacks, particularly with modern pickups and modern so-called permanent needles. It can very easily be disastrous, from the store's standpoint, when the customer returns the records after having played them with a chipped or badly worn sapphire (which he has been foolishly led to believe was good for 10,000 plays or a "lifetime" of wear) rammed up the snout of a four-and-a-half ounce (circa 1936) pickup.

"Personally, I have not spent ten minutes of my life in a store's record booth, although I do not necessarily recommend this course. I have preferred to buy 'blind', which does not mean buying 'dumb', and have expected a dud, from time to time, which I gladly threw away immediately. Back in the days when *exact* and greatly desired records could be ordered—and delivered, I had this arrangement with my local shop: I would not use his demonstration booths, provided everything I ordered was obtainable from the wholesaler and *not out* of stock. This assured me of *factory fresh* records only—a subject which for me probably amounts to more than a foible. Today, however, factory fresh records may not be as good as those, possibly played a couple of time, available in a store.

"I, for one, want to congratulate Columbia for their candor in admitting an accomplished fact—that no more manual sets may be had. For months before the fact admitted manual sets were sought but never found. Since manual sets are wanted by the minority, there is just reason for Victor's advance in price on such pressings.

"It is my opinion that the so-called 'Classical Musical Renaissance' of the U.S.A. is an

overstated conclusion. Musical propagandists, wishing to prove a point, will tell you that whereas in former years people purchased single discs, today they buy voluminous albums. I wonder to what extent this may be ascribed to the necessity of owners of automatic changers for providing a functional use for their mechanisms? There is nothing so deadly to a changer owner as a selection covering two sides of a single disc. Without projecting a sweeping nation-wide generalization, I will offer that the natural inclinations of most of the changer owners that I know *is* toward the type of music that machines cannot properly handle—specifically the two-sided staple operatic and concert overture and similar pieces of music. How much album buying is symptomatic of laziness? We will never know. The companies have capitalized on the proved theorem that *is* easier to peddle a reprocessed paper folder, perilously retaining—for the moment—five discs, and lithographed or printed on its cover with often offensive advertising of a company (for which they charge dearly) rather than on selling two records not in albums. It is the path of least resistance on which too much big business in this precious country of ours prefer to travel."

* * *

Our short discussion on modern pickups in the December editorial brought some interesting repercussions which will be taken up at a later date. Hardly two people are in agreement on the relative merits of any one modern pickup. So much more is brought out in the record, both good and bad, that many listeners acquiring a new pickup become dubious about its overall merits and not infrequently a purchaser concludes that he might have done better by acquiring another unit. However, there is no assurance that because your editor, or someone else, finds satisfaction with a different unit that this will consistently follow. It so happens that our set was designed originally for an Audak Pro 2, and we encountered no difficulty in connecting Audak's latest pickup—the Tuned Ribbon, Model 74-A, of low impedance. We already had sufficient bass compensation and possessed a good transformer for coupling the low impedance pickup. Low impedance pickups require a coupling transformer, in this particular case ours is one having 80,000 ohms on the secondary.

INDICES and BACK COPIES

The American Record Guide

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SOME BRITISH RECORDINGS OF 1947

By Edward Sackville-West

Since my last article on current English recordings (July 1947 issue), the output of serious music on records has suddenly reached dimensions greater ever than those attained in the 1930s, with the result that I cannot devote as much space to each item as I have done hitherto. On the other hand, I shall continue to assume that a mere mention is preferable to silence. Complicated as the situation is by wasteful horrors of competitive recording, symphonic music of course accounts for two-thirds of the issues I shall signalize. Of these only four are actually symphonies. First in importance I should put Beethoven's *Sixth Symphony* played by the Orchestra of the Agusteo, Rome, conducted by de Sabata (HMV DB6473/77). I shall not pretend that the woodwind playing in this set is as exquisitely delicate and precise as in Bruno Walter's; but the performance is magnificently vital and the reproduction a very great improvement on any previous one. We have had two new versions of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*: one by the Hallé Orchestra under Barbirolli (HMV C3563/69) and the other by the Concertgebouw Orchestra under Van Beinum (Decca K1626/31). I find the former performance rather insular, and although the tone of the upper strings in all recent Decca issues is apt to be lacerating, Van Beinum seems more at home in the music than Barbirolli. Apart from the violins, the tonal definition is very realistic, and the balance

and recession are well arranged. In my view this issue supercedes that made in 1939 by Walter and the Paris Conservatory Orchestra. The latter was a fine set in its day, but the recording now sounds dated.

From the engineering point of view, some of the best recordings of today come to us from Prague, Vienna and Rome. It is not a question of performance only (though that is generally outstanding), but of studio mechanics. For example, it would be difficult to improve upon the issues of Janacek's *Sinfonietta* (HMV C3573/75) and of Dvorak's overture, *In der Natur* (HMV C3628/29), both played by the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra under Rafael Kubelik. Janacek is a most interesting and attractive composer, too little known outside of his own country. His music is fundamentally impressionistic, and at the same time extremely compressed. One feels a noble and delicate musical imagination at work beneath the rather boisterous surface of the *Sinfonietta*. *In der Natur* is much plainer sailing and perhaps slightly too long; but—as usual with Dvorak—the material is fresh as paint and full of lyrical feeling. Excellent though these two recordings are, the post-war issues of the Vienna Philharmonica Orchestra seem to me even better. The instrumental tone is splendid, the conducting of Herbert von Karajan a model of stylistic elegance and precision. Five issues, almost equally admirable, have come from this orchestra in the past six

months: Mozart's *Symphony in B flat, K. 319* (Columbia LX1033/35); two waltzes, *Kaiserwalzer* (Columbia LX 1021), and *Künstlerleben* (Columbia LX1012), and an overture, *Der Zigeunerbaron* (Columbia LX-1009), by Johann Strauss; and Tchaikovsky's fantasy-overture *Romeo and Juliet* (Columbia LX1033/35). The little Mozart symphony, which dates—with the exception of the Minuet added three years later—from 1779, has been recorded before by Edwin Fischer and his Chamber Orchestra (circa 1937). The latter was a good recording in its day, but it cannot compare with the new one. The work itself is not inferior to the better known of the Salzburg symphonies. With regard to the Strauss discs, it might seem incredible that any conductor of today could equal Walter in this field; but I think it must be admitted that Von Karajan achieves performances unsurpassably Viennese in tone and rhythm. Similarly although Koussevitzky's set of Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* has had several rivals lately (including Beecham's), I find the Vienna Philharmonic version quite as dramatic as any of its predecessors, and a good deal better recorded.

Some Local Records

The visit of the Vienna Opera to Covent Garden, last autumn, was a great popular success and has led to the issue of some unusually attractive vocal discs: in particular, Hans Hotter's recording of Schubert's *Der Wanderer* and *Der Doppelgänger* (Columbia LX1004), *Sweet Bird* from Handel's *Il Penseroso*—sung by Elisabeth Schwarzkopf with the Vienna Philharmonic (Columbia LX-1010), and the opening duet from Act I of Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* sung by Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Irmgard Seefried with the Vienna Philharmonic (Columbia LX1036/37). The last two discs are conducted by the regular conductor of the Vienna Opera, Josef Krips. Hans Hotter tends to a rather rough style in the opera house, but this is not apparent in his singing of the Schubert songs, which is warm and steady. Schwarzkopf and Seefried are charming and accomplished singers; and although the microphone uncovers a certain shrillness in both, their performances are excellent.

Four concertos for piano, two for horn, and one for oboe, deserve attention in varying degrees. New sets of Brahms' *Second Piano*

Concerto—Solomon with the Philharmonia Orchestra, under Dobrowen (HMV C3610/15) and Chopin's *Second Piano Concerto*—Malczynski with the Philharmonia under Kletzki (Columbia LX1013/16) ought to have contributed importantly to our experience of these faded works; but they proved disappointing in that respect, although the recording is in both cases on a high level. Malczynski's performance lacks rapture, his delivery of Chopin's figuration and passage-work cannot compare to Rubinstein's; and while Solomon's Brahms is as powerful and well thought out as everything else he does, the orchestral playing is less authoritative than that of the Bachaus set. I cannot, on the other hand, speak too highly of the Grieg *Concerto* by Dinu Lipatti and the Philharmonia under Alceo Galliera (Columbia LX1029/32). For sensibility, strength and virtuosity combined, this young Roumanian has no rival today among pianists of his generation. This is really a superb recording, which should wipe out any unhappy memories of the Rubinstein set. Lipatti is also responsible for quite the most impressive solo piano recording I have yet heard: his performance of Chopin's *Sonata in B minor, Op. 58* (Columbia LX994/96) is to my mind sensationally faultless in style and execution. I find it hard to imagine anyone's continuing to prefer the Brailowsky version, with its perpetual rubato and heavy emphasis. At a lower level, but excellent in their kind, are Eileen Joyce's recording of Mendelssohn's delightful *Concerto No. 1 in G major*—London Symphony under Fistoulari (Decca K1687-88) and a most adroit performance of Saint-Saëns' *Second Piano Concerto* by Moiseiwitsch and the Philharmonia under Basil Cameron (HMV C3588/90). That unique artist, Dennis Brain, has given us the second of Mozart's *Horn Concertos*—Philharmonic under Süsskind (Columbia DX1365/66), and the first of Richard Strauss's—Philharmonia under Galliera (Columbia DX1397/98). The latter is a very early work (1885), harmlessly Mendelssohnian but pretty enough when played as well as it is here. (We are promised an issue of Strauss's *Second Horn Concerto*, which was composed during the late war.) Both these sets are exceptionally recorded. So is the *Oboe Concerto in C minor* of Benedetto Marcello—a work which Bach admired so much that he transcribed it for piano

(in D minor). This is far from being the merely respectable routine piece you might expect from one of the lesser 18th-century composers. Leon Goossens' oboe has never sounded more lovely, and the recording is as kind to the Philharmonia's strings as it is to the soloist (Columbia DX1389/90).

A Britten Work

Of the miscellaneous orchestral works I should draw attention first to the *Interludes* from *Peter Grimes* by Benjamin Britten. There have been two simultaneous issues of these thrilling pieces—London Symphony under Sargent (Columbia DX1441/41), and Concertgebouw under Van Beinum (Decca K1702/04). The Decca set seems to me much the more impressively played, and it includes (as the Columbia does not) the wonderful and sinister Passacaglia from Act II. Britten's music has proved to export well, while Vaughan Williams has not. Nevertheless, that Wordsworthian man of genius has, I believe, admirers in the United States, and these will welcome a new recording of *The Lark Ascending*—David Wise, with Liverpool Phil. Orch. under Sargent (Columbia DX1386/87), which replaces former issues. This rhapsody is more accessible than *Flos Campi*, a leisurely, mannered, but curiously seductive work of much later date. Divided into six sections, and inspired by the *Song of Solomon*, this symphonic poem is an elaborate and beautiful piece of orchestral writing, with solo viola concertante (in the manner of Berlioz's *Harold in Italy*) and a wordless chorus embedded in the orchestral texture. The performance by William Primrose, Philharmonia Orch., BBC Chorus under Boult (HMV DB6353/55) is exceedingly fine, and the recording engineers emerge triumphant from a very high test. Quite as much, I think, must be said in favor of the recording of Delius' *Song of the High Hills* by the Royal Philharmonic Orch., Luton Choral Society under Beecham (HMV DB-6470/72). This vague, meandering work is one of the same order as *Flos Campi*, but—in my view—of inferior interest. It does, however, contain passages of considerable poetic beauty, in the composer's *fin-de-siècle* style. The performance could scarcely be better conceived nor executed. Another Beecham issue must be briefly mentioned here: the *Polka* and *Dance of the Com-*

medians from Smetana's *The Bartered Bride* (HMV DB6454). Although without positive information on the subject, I am inclined to think that this disc may be one of the first results of recent experiments heralding a further degree of realism in reproduction. Admirers of Elgar at his best will be glad to hear of a superbly vigorous performance of the *Introduction and Allegro* for Strings by the Hallé Orch., under Barbirolli (HMV C-3669/70). The recording is splendid in tone, and there is no distortion even where the bowing is most ferocious. To wind up this section I recommend a most agreeable performance of Fauré's *Pavanne* by the Philharmonic Orch., under Sargent (Columbia disc DX1369). The inclusion of the choral parts adds greatly to the expressive value of this decorous nocturne.

Verdi's "Aida"

The complete set of Verdi's *Aida*, with Caniglia, Stignani, Gigli, Bechi, Tajo, Pasero, Chorus and Orchestra of the Rome Opera House under Serafin (HMV DB6392/6411), is rather better sung and recorded than last year's *Traviata*. Caniglia and Gigli do not seem to me ideal in their parts, but both have admirable moments. The issue as a whole reflects great credit on all concerned and is well worth possessing. I cannot say as much for the abridgement of Gluck's *Orfeo* with Kathleen Ferrier, Anne Ayars, Zoe Vlachopoulos, the Glyndebourne Chorus and Orchestra, under Stiedry (Decca K1856/62). Miss Ferrier is dignified but rather plummy, the cuts are eccentric, and the recording shows signs of haste. Moreover, *Che faro* is taken nonsensically fast. In fairness, I must add that both Anne Ayars and Zoe Vlachopoulos make as delightful and distinguished an impression as they did in the performance at Glyndebourne; and that Miss Ferrier, whose voice I do not happen to like, sings *Che puro ciel* with genuine feeling. Another abridgement—this time of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*—is altogether better. These records are dubbed from a set made in Germany during the war by Lemnitz, Erb, Beckmann, Huesch, Schulze, the St. Thomas Choir and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, under Ramin (HMV DB6516/31). The dubbing (of an originally quite good recording) has been very carefully done, and the performance has great qualities, although

some may find the solo singing too romantic for their taste. From those who can still derive pleasure from the later style of Mendelssohn, with its blend of Bach and Spohr, there is the complete set of the *Elijah*, which has been already issued by Columbia in the States. It is well sung with remarkable conviction and the recording is of a high standard.

Chamber Music

Recent developments in recording technique have affected, in my estimation, chamber music not altogether happily. Solo strings, in particular, are apt to sound painfully shrill and edgy; and the result of bringing all the instruments of an ensemble much closer to the ear (as it were) than is possible with an orchestra, has been in some sort to spoil the polyphonic balance. With these reservations, then, I can cordially recommend five issues: Mozart's *Quartets in D minor, K.421* by the Hungarian Quartet (HMV DB6445/47) and *G major, K.387* by the Griller Quartet (Decca K1652/55); Beethoven's *Quartet in C minor, Op. 18, No. 4* by the Paganini String Quartet (HMV DB-6488/90); Brahms' *Quartet in A minor, Op. 51, No. 2* by Busch Quartet (Columbia LX-1022/25); Haydn's *Quartet in C major, Op. 33, No. 3* by the Griller Quartet (Decca K1668/69). The Brahms *Piano Trio in C minor, Op. 101* has been recorded by the Trio di Trieste (HMV C3624/26) in a rich and "dynamic" performance, expertly transferred to the disc. However, unless you feel you can no longer get on without this work, I do not recommend the set, for the player's conception of the music is wildly un-Brahmsian—with eccentric tempi and unexplained rubato.

Few, if any, instruments record in general as badly as the organ. However, a great executant from Italy, Fernando Germani, who is notable for a fine taste in registration,

has made some most impressive issues lately. Of these Franck's *Chorale No. 3 in A minor* (HMV C3580/81) is on the whole the most successful. A record of Bach's *Toccata and Fugue in D minor* played by Jeanne Demessieux (Decca K1635) is perhaps even more arresting. Her playing is distinguished by extraordinary deftness and clarity, and in the *Toccata* she achieves some most imaginative effects.

Of the vocal issues the most considerable is unquestionably a new set of Schubert's *Die Schoene Mullerin*, sung by Aksel Schiottz. The Danish tenor has exactly the right voice for this cycle: lyrical, musically, and wide enough in scope to avoid transposing any of the songs. The set has a further great advantage in the supremely accomplished playing of the piano part by Gerald Moore. The recording is gratifyingly balanced. Two of Fauré's best songs—*Arpège* and *Clair de lune*—continue to illustrate the name of Gérard Souzay (baritone). Three English folk songs—*The Foggy, Foggy Dew*, *The Ploughboy*, and *Come You Not from Newcastle* (HMV DA1873)—appear in arrangements by Benjamin Britten which are discreetly felicitous and lightly pointed by an imagination of genius. Peter Pears, accompanied by Britten himself, sings these delicious tunes perfectly. Ravel's three *Don Quixote* songs have been re-recorded by Pierre Bernac and Francis Poulenc (HMV DA1869). Last, but not least, T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* have been recorded in full by the poet himself (HMV C3598/3603). This is, for obvious reasons, an important issue. The author of these Beethovenian "word" quartets has a voice which accords well with the poems' high seriousness, their dry and melancholy beauty. A little more variation in the tempo of the recital might, I seem to feel, have made the unemphatic rhythms easier to keep in mind; but, all things considered, we can hardly wish these records other than they are.



Mahler from an etching by Arthur Paunzen



GUSTAV M A H L E R

By Neville Cardus

IV

We do not land ourselves into contradiction if we agree that Mahler was sincere and yet an actor, and that his music is thoroughly symphonic yet full of dramatic or self-conscious gestures. It is the nature of the symphony to unfold a drama; the greatest of the Beethoven symphonies, the 'Eroica', the Fifth and the Ninth, tell of a problem that from a preliminary antinomy, challenge and clash of motives, achieves a solution; the movements mount to a clinching peak; there is a crescendo, not a decrescendo of the symphonic tone and dynamic. Mahler in none of his symphonies leaves us or himself at the point where he began; he does not, as Brahms does in the Second, Third and Fourth symphonies, give us only an accumulation of rich musical material. He differs from Beethoven by his personal participation in the drama; he is not in the Beethoven succession really. His lineage is with the C major symphony of Schubert, in which a

romantic connection is felt between man and nature.

He was the born actor in his finales, which are usually 'effective', the whole orchestra taking the curtain or fade-out. No; there is nothing insincere about the Mahler apotheosis; the gesture may be aware of its purpose, none the less it is honest. As an original creative artist he had an inferiority complex; consequently he took care to arrange an imposing grouping at the right moment. Even the farewell of 'Das Lied von der Erde' is not unselfconscious; the daring repetitions at the word 'Ewig', softer and softer, with the celesta tinkling its pretty bitter-sweet, reveals that in Mahler resided the disinterested spectator of Diderot's 'Paradox of the Actor'. And here we come — as every discussion of Mahler is bound sooner or later to come — to the question of his naivety. The conceptions behind much of Mahler's work at first strike us as childlike or childish. There is the Fourth symphony's

gilt and gingerbread picture of a paradise where the Austrian peasants see eternity not in a blade of grass but in a vegetable garden with haloed gardeners. The angels bake the bread while

Sankt Peter in Himmel sieht zu

This folk-symphony is woven from the most familiar tunes by the subtle and nicely-calculated instrumentation of a great artificer of music. We must indeed know what we intend the word 'naïve' to mean before we apply it to Mahler. If we turn from our consideration of him for a moment and take a glance at Bruckner, the most naïve of composers, we are bound to confess that if Mahler also can be called naïve the term is capable of generous accommodation. Bruckner was undoubtedly naïve; he was simple of heart and simple of technique. There was nothing clever about him; he was unsophisticated and would not have dared to use the Mahler portamento or appoggiatura. If Bruckner sometimes lost his way in a development-section, the reason was not only that he was contemplating God but that his skill was not equal to everything. Naïvety implies a certain innocence, an open-eyed wonder. Mahler, with the Jew's sharp mind, never forgot himself; it was his restlessness of intellect and his gestures that prevented him from composing an adagio. Adagio, by the way, is not just a tempo indication; it denotes a mode of musical feeling. Beethoven in the Ninth symphony fixed the adagio style once and for all. It is a sermon in music, with many turnings upon itself, many labyrinthine ways, many Firstlys, Secondlys, Thirdlys; in fact, many Tenthlys and Lastlys. Apart from Bruckner nobody since Beethoven, except Elgar in his A flat symphony, has composed in the adagio style. Brahms seldom got beyond a secondly and he was lyrical not contemplative. The adagio of the Ninth symphony of Mahler, though it pays tribute to Bruckner, is too nervous, too sentimental in nuance, to suit the simple sublimity of the adagio style. A genuine naïvety is not conscious that it is open to parody. In one or two places in his symphonies Mahler takes pains to instruct his interpreters to avoid suggestions of parody. Bruckner is never aware of exposure at any moment to parody; he does not watch his step, so to say. The artist and the actor in Mahler surveyed the nature of their material; the naïve

conception was artfully shaped; for example, study the 'Resurrection' episode in the Second of the Mahler symphonies; the heaven of the orchestra trumpets the bodeful summons; a flute flutters in the silence, like a nightingale in an apocalyptic dawn; the tympani booms as though out of the earth; the dead arise and march to a banal tune; but the skill of a symphonist growing to mastery connives all the material to an end which is one of the most remarkable and original in music. Mahler was Bruckner's pupil and he rendered tribute to his master in his own work. But Bruckner was as the saint sent to dwell on earth for a brief space; he had not to seek and struggle to find his heaven as Mahler so sorely had to seek and struggle, being not naïve, but complex and lost in the world.

V

Mahler was once asked to state his religious and philosophical beliefs or credo and he replied, 'Ich bin Musiker'. He also stated that in music, whether he was creating or conducting, all questions about the meaning of the world became clear to him; indeed no questions remained to be asked. Music was all experience for Mahler. A technical explanation will not get over the fact that not until towards the end of his life did his music achieve warmth of harmony. Even at the height of his mastery as a craftsman, when his culture was as wide and experienced as any in Europe, he still wrote with a bareness of melody that made the softness of a close harmony impossible. In the first movement of the Fifth symphony, there is a return to the Faustian stress and ambition of the first movement of the Second symphony; the expression is actually bonier; and in the rondo fugue, which is the finale, Mahler's melody is so much contending against itself that it will not blend within the give-and-take limits of polyphony. He was certainly craftsman enough when he composed the Fifth symphony to soften, had he deliberately chosen, the jarring independence of melodic parts into a warmer harmony. But Mahler was never the man to regard music as an art to be contrived as though from the outside; if he could not feel a harmony of spirit he could not equivocate and write a dishonest musical harmony. The failure of much of his work was caused by his inability to subdue the

man in him to the artist. Wordsworth was probably right to 'recollect in tranquillity' before beginning to make poetry. The rondo fugue of the Fifth symphony is almost wilful in its complexity; Mahler, in fact, was compelled to readjust the instrumental parts; he went beyond his own command of orchestral *ensemble*. (Yet in the same work he could give us the saccharine adagietto.) In much of the writing of Mahler's middle-period, from the Fifth to the Seventh symphonies, there is a suspicion of a challenge to Strauss in the shape of multitudinous and vaunting melody; but Mahler was the more serious composer of the two — he could not wear an orchestral coat of many colours for its own sake.

In 'Das Lied von der Erde' we come to one of the great transitions in the history of any artist's spiritual journey; and of course the style is changed proportionately. Maybe in the first song or movement of the work ('Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde'), some old distress and disunity remain; the key is Mahler's favourite tragic key — A minor. There is a reckless defiance in the flourish of four horns at the beginning; there is mocking and stinging pizzicato; there is a nervous tremolo; the solo voice grapples against the orchestra's rhetorical drunken dynamics. We remain a little longer in the world that has broken him. Then we enter the twilight of the second movement ('Der Einsame in Herbst'). The tone is suddenly reduced to the scale of orchestral miniature; beauty passes like shadows over the cool lake of Mahler's tone; life, the music says now, is but a reflection, and will not last. The third movement ('Von der Jugend') is the scherzo; the composer enchant us to a pathetically lovely and fragile cloud-cuckoo land; delicate china porcelain is transmuted to tone; 'like the tiger's back arches the bridge of jade, and in the pavilion friends are sitting, beautifully dressed ... some are writing verses. The halfmoon is in the water, upside down; all is reflected in the water'. Mahler catches the image in his orchestra; such a magic of dancing melody as this has seldom visited music; the alchemy of it all is done by the power of genius. There is a remarkable visual sense employed in the fourth movement ('Von der Schoenheit'), a companion-piece to the Chinese Pavilion; young maidens pluck flowers, and horses

charge and rear decoratively; the orchestral art by which Mahler creates his illusion is here absolutely certain, and employed with the most precise judgment of each instrument's own colour and of its suitability for blending into a tinted whole. In the fifth movement, the tenor again extols the grape; but there is no tumult or challenge this time. 'Is life a dream; why labour and worry?' A bird sings on the bough; Mahler twitters his oboe and then sweetens us with his own characteristic string-crescendo, beginning of course, 'ritard', followed by 'langsam'; the whole (naturally!) 'zurueckhaltend'.

The finale, the 'Abschied', is a long slow movement, almost imperceptibly diversified — recitative, funeral march, and lyrical and passionate leave-taking, which seems to put beauty and regret into the wine-press of the orchestra and squeeze out the last juices. The vocal writing in the recitative sections awakens the secret places of loneliness. The wood-wind flutters in a world of sunset and valediction. It is music that seems to listen and wait. A voice emphasizes the stillness. At the climax, the lees of ache for lost beauty are exuded: 'Wo bleibst du? Du laesst mich lang allein?' The rising arches of the vocal part, at the words: 'O Schoenheit ... O ewigen Liebes ... Lebens ... trunk'ne Welt', and the descent, with the orchestra's antiphony of strings rising and falling into an ecstasy of appoggiatura — I know no music more heart-wounding than this, as an expression of longing for far-off loveliness; not even the 'Nur einmal, ach; nur einmal noch' of Isolde. Now comes the funeral march or dirge, which in my opinion makes all other funeral marches or dirges merely so many public ceremonials or State occasions for the expression of a commonplace grief, with pall-bearers and all. Out of Mahler's chasm of emptiness, the voice asks 'Where do you go and why?' The recitative is remote: Mahler instructs that it should be sung without expression; but he himself has seen to it that no irrelevance of emotion could possibly be put into the vocal writing here; it is recitative that seems to make a ghost of the speech-accentuation to which it shapes itself. It is the recitative not of resignation but of rapt and ready submission. No bird-song flutters now from the wood-wind in the silver-grey twilight of Mahler's orchestra; not even Debussy has conjured a stillness

like this of Mahler's; it is not the silence of mysterious haunts of the spirit; it is silence of a tired human heart content at last to surrender to sleep. 'Wohin ich geh?' Ich geh, ich wand're in die Berge.' To the mountain and to the Heimat. The strings and harp glimmer through the mists; and with a simple change to C major, the music sings the swan-song: 'The dear earth blossoms everywhere.' The main melody of the 'Abschied', derived from the theme of the 'Trunklied', where the singer dreams of the blue heaven and the everlasting springtime, is simplified; there is no appoggiatura in it now, no restlessness, no excess of passion. The voice withdraws to the silence: 'Ewig, Ewig.' Oboe and flute seem to hold the last faint echoes from the hills; in the deep night of the orchestra, trombones and strings intone the earth-embracing C major; and we cannot say exactly at what moment the work ends.

In conception and art, the 'Abschied' is amongst the unique things of music. The score is original; even the device of the appoggiatura is as though transformed to a fresh key for the opening of unknown case-memts. The technique of Mahler was perhaps the most elaborate that any one composer has commanded; in 'Das Lied', he draws it through the sieve of a suddenly clarified mind. The large orchestra approximates at times to the style of chamber music. Every instrument is exposed, in an orchestration of silverpoint. A member of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra once said to me: 'Mahler, in "Das Lied von der Erde", makes you feel naked.' It is in this masterpiece that his scoring is prophetic; his melody is as free as arabesque; it is not chained to a fixed system of harmony. The form makes fantasias in sonata-sequence; Mahler in his maturity was one of the most imaginative and free moulders or weavers of the symphonic tissue the art has so far known. Compared with him, most of his contemporaries speak to us in the short-breathed compact syntax of minds which can employ only brief and closely juxtaposed paragraphs.

To the critics of Mahler who have declared that 'Das Lied' is a pastiche, I would quote only one example of his genius for germination and synthesis. A three-note theme, based on descending intervals of a major

third, appears first in the opening movement at the words: 'Das Firmament blaut ewig'. The same figure is transformed in the 'Anschiad', when the solo recitative is first heard; and from descending intervals of a major third, the main arches of the movement take their curve: ('Ich sehne mich, O Freund', and 'Die liebe Erde'). All the best of Mahler is in this work, the naive poet, the cunning artist, the child and the man, and the gatherer of harvests and the sower of new seeds, the composer who brought the romantic movement in music to an end and also pointed the way to the immediate future. It was Mahler who directed Schoenberg to new paths; after Mahler, the Schoenberg of 'Verklaerte Nacht' could no longer feed on the 'romantic' modulated harmony. The naive Mahler, with all his banality, was both the epigone and the prophet; he glanced back and he looked forward.

V I

The convenience of writers on Mahler would have been suited if he had died after the composition of 'Das Lied von der Erde'; here was the 'farewell', the leave-taking from the world, properly histrionic. But there was still the musician in Mahler to satisfy, the instrumental composer who had lost his way in the world of the symphony because he endeavoured to live in it to the full extent of his complex nature. When he wrote 'Das Lied von der Erde' he knew that after all he had created a masterpiece; harmony entered his soul for a while. Before he died, he needed to compose a wordless symphony, in which he might make his philosophy and valediction symphonic and universal, not personal and lyrical. The human voice and the word could at last be dispensed with and transcended, surely; for his command of symphonic resources, for years masterly, could now be exercised easelly; no longer had he to fight a sense of fear or failure. In the Ninth symphony there is a warm depth of harmony not to be found elsewhere in Mahler's music; the last movement is the nearest to the style of adagio he composed; the tone and the calm expansions of the phrases are of the essence of the adagio style. It is probably a tribute to his master, Bruckner; the movement is turned down from the main keys of the symphony, D minor and D

(Continued on page 196)



RECORD NOTES AND REVIEWS

Orchestra

BACH: *Brandenberg Concerto No. 4 in G major*; Pro Musica Orchestra, Otto Klemperer, conductor. Vox set, two plastic discs, price \$5.25.

▲This is the first of the *Brandenberg Concerti* recordings to reach us which Klemperer has made. He has made all six. Our Paris correspondent tells us that the recordings were made shortly after the liberation and the ensemble employed was drawn from the Straram Orchestra, which has some of the foremost musicians in France. Owing to a tie-up with another company, the Straram name could not be used nor could those of the soloists be declared. The harpsichordist throughout the six sets, we are given to understand, is Mme. Roesgen-Champion.

Klemperer has aimed to reproduce the orchestra of Bach's time and has scaled his ensemble to the number of players he believes the composer would have used. The inclusion of the harpsichord, which is in

reality the backbone of Bach's orchestra in these works, is laudable. I await with interest the recording of the fifth concerto. It is unfortunate that the reproduction is not more acoustically alive. The recording was made in the Salle Chopin, which is said to be ideal for chamber music ensemble, but the results obtained do not bear this out. However, I am told, the equipment used was French Polydor's pre-war set-up. It is not that the recording is not satisfactory but the fact that it does not mate with modern recording. The plastic discs are an advance over most of Vox's shellac ones.

I am under the impression that the flutists in this performance are using an old-type instrument which closely approximates the sound of recorders in use in Bach's time. Klemperer's Bach is sharp-edged and intensified. Comparing it to Busch's, where there is a greater inflection of line, is like comparing an etching and a mezzo-tint of the same subject. Klemperer with his intensity of spirit and greater precision outlines the mathematical formuli of Bach and

makes the music more intellectual than emotional. Those who think Busch injects too much sentiment will be drawn to this performance. While I admire the strength of purpose in Klemperer, is exacting musicianship, and fully intend to keep this album, I do not feel that at any time it would become a replacement for the Busch performance.

DVORAK: *Nocturne for Strings, Opus 40;* The Busch Chamber Players, conducted by Adolf Busch. Columbia 10-inch disc 17513-D, price \$1.00.

▲On the strength of this performance, Columbia would do well to let Mr. Busch record some of Dvorak's symphonies—for he reveals a sensitive insight into the composer's music which was certainly missing in Leinsdorff's recent rendition of the *First Symphony*. The late Leslie Heward recorded this work with the Hallé Orchestra in England, but his use of a larger orchestra does not substantiate the charm of the music like Busch's smaller ensemble. This quiet piece, redolent with suggestions of a Nature mood, both melodically and harmonically recalls Wagner and the spirit of Lohengrin seems to hover over the final section. Yet, the music is individual and an attractive example of the Pan-like Dvorak in a moment of poetic repose. The recording does justice to Mr. Busch's fine performance. —P.H.R.

GOULD: *Interplay for Piano and Orchestra (American Concertette);* Morton Gould (piano) with the Robin Hood Dell Orchestra. Columbia set MX-289, two discs, price \$3.35.

▲Gould is the modern arch-prototype of the *Gebrauchsmusik* composer of former times. This work was written in 1943 as "utility music" for an appearance of Iturbi on the radio program Gould was then conducting. Originally it was conceived as a small concerto which was called *American Concertette*. Later, Jerome Robbins, the dancer, adapted the music for a ballet which he called *Interplay*. The work is pretentious with a rhythmic drive and facile slickness typical of its composer. There is a modern *Gavotte*, a *Blues* section and others replete with animation. Robbin's ballet is described as a work "based on dance games in which there is a constant play between the classic ballet steps

and the contemporary spirit in which they are danced". The ballet titles for the four movements—*Free Play*, *Horseplay*, *Byplay* and *Team Play*—are not inappropriately chosen. Gould knows how to put on a good performance and he does not muffle this one. The recording is first-rate. —P.G.

HANSON: *Symphony No. 3 in A minor (9 sides);* and **SIBELIUS:** *Maiden with the Roses* from *Swanwhite—Suite, Op. 54;* The Boston Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Serge Koussevitzky. Victor set DM-1170, price \$6.00.

▲This symphony, which dates from 1937-38, is more mature than the composer's earlier ones (both of which are recorded). In spirit, it is closer to his first, the *Nordic Symphony*, but reveals a broader prospectus in its polyphony and its harmonic structure. The composer tells us that the work is an effort to pay tribute to the epic qualities of "that sturdy race of northern pioneers who, as early as 1638, founded the first Swedish settlement on the Delaware and who were in later centuries to constitute such a mighty force in the conquering of the west". The composer gave no sub-title to this opus, yet he might well have called it the "Pioneer" symphony, for "the rugged and turbulent" qualities of the first and last movements suggest a musical depiction of pioneer characteristics. Despite some dissonant elements, this work is not modern in spirit but harkens back to the later romantics with traceable influences of Strauss and Sibelius. Hanson, however, is no mere imitator but an individualist speaking a musical language which he most naturally feels. There is a familiarity in the substance of his musical thought without a striking evidence of new life—as in the music of Sibelius. All of which is not intended as derogatory to Hanson's music, for it has admirable qualities which are probably more appealing to most listeners than the "arid intellectualism and bleak objectivity" of some modern composers.

The opening movement has strength but some diffusion of purpose. The slow movement, despite its slightly dissonant climax, is fundamentally sentimental. The scherzo suggests Indian influences with its characteristic rhythmic patterns for the tympani, and the finale, based on thematic material derived from the first two movements, seems

somewhat striving in its initial effects but builds to a showy conclusion.

The encore, a quietly lyrical miniature from Sibelius' incidental music to Strindberg's fair story—*Snowwhite*, seems like a gossamer thread hanging in mid-air after the substantial more earthy qualities of the symphony. Like so many filler-ins its appropriateness is debatable.

Dr. Koussevitzky performs the symphony with unmistakable dramatic fervor and earnestness, and the recording of extended range is splendid.

KATCHATURIAN: *Masquerade—Symphonic Suite*; The Boston "Pops" Orchestra, Arthur Fiedler, conductor. Victor set DM-1166, two discs, price \$3.00.

▲ In June, we had a version of this suite by the Santa Monica Symphony Orchestra (Asch set 800). As effectively realized as that performance and recording were, this one exceeds it. Composed as incidental music for a Moscow revival in 1939 of Lermontov's play, *Masquerade*, the score is in a neo-romantic style lacking originality. Lermontov, 1814-1841, was called "the poet of the Caucasus" since he belonged to a family of the Tula government. On the death of Pushkin in 1837 his poem addressed to the Tsar—*On the Death of the Poet*—resigned in his exile to the Caucasus for a year. In 1841, he was killed in a duel over a woman by an old schoolmate. A revival of *Masquerade*, a satire and indictment of the high society of its day, was understandable in modern Russia. Such a play should have inspired Khatchaturian to write more imaginative music than we find in this suite. If he aimed at satire he missed it by a wide margin and instead only awakened echoes of Tchaikovsky and others before him.

SCHUBERT: *Symphony No. 9 in C major* (11 sides); and MENDELSSOHN: *Midsummer Night's Dream—Scherzo*; The NBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Arturo Toscanini. Victor set DM-1167, price \$7.00.

▲ A long time ago, Toscanini's interpretation of this work was labelled by critics as one "peculiarly his own"—an interpretation, in which to his credit, the conductor did not seek to add "things which the composer never intended should be added", such as distor-

tions of pacing and dynamics. To some listeners, Toscanini's concentrated honesty and intensity in his unfoldment of this score negates its romantic qualities. To others—and myself—his interpretation is one of the most thrilling experiences imaginable. It is possible to appreciate more than one interpretation of a work—thus, one can enjoy Walter's warmly romantic and more affectionate treatment and admire Toscanini's more dynamic reading. In my review of Walter's recent re-recording, I indicated that this music is filled with an emotional dynamism, and Schubert intended this work to be a "Grand Symphony", an opus written in the grand manner of the classicists. However, the romantic in Schubert could not be suppressed, hence we find in this score, as Mosco Carner has said, "a curious tug-of-war between the classical and the romantic".

Toscanini more than any other conductor substantiates the classicism in this music. He does not alter his beat to "caress" a phrase or hamper the rhythmic flow with interpolated ritards. A fact, of which many musicians are unaware is, that in this symphony, the composer indicated no ritards. Toscanini alone respects this and his assured control of every phrase reveals his unassailable musical honesty as well as his mastery.

The English critic, Neville Cardus, calls this symphony Schubert's *tour de force*, and Toscanini's interpretation substantiates its towering strength. His conception of the scherzo and finale are "empyrean" yet thrilling. Cardus says that Schubert "was rather like a young god" and in this scherzo "you can see him and the other young gods at play . . . tossing the rainbow ball of music

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about and stretching the growing limbs", and of the finale he says "the risks embraced by Schubert . . . were terrible; he trembles from bar to bar on the thin edge that separates the sublime from the ridiculous". Listening to Toscanini's performance of these movements, I recalled Cardus' words. The conductor's control and fervor in the finale suggest the sublimity of a surging sea that never breaks its bonds. It is one of the most exciting experiences of which I know, in our rich and varied world of music-making.

Victor has given the conductor brilliant and realistic recording which should pose no problems for satisfying reproduction on any machine. However, the fullest enjoyment of its engineering skill will be best attested on extended-range equipment.

Toscanini's new version of the Mendelssohn Scherzo seems overshadowed by the finale of the Schubert *C major*. For all the detailed accuracies of the playing the mood does not seem just right. One wishes this performance had been saved for an album of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* music.

SCHUMANN (arr. Herbeck): *Traumerei, Op. 15, No. 7*, and (arr. Jockisch); *Abendlied, Op. 85, No. 12*; The Boston "Pops" Orchestra, conducted by Arthur Fiedler. Victor disc 12-0017, price \$1.00.

▲These essentially pianistic pieces do not lend themselves too well to orchestral treatment, and I, for one, fail to appreciate the efforts of the transcribers. Although Mr. Fiedler reveals his accustomed musical competence I do not feel that his "heart" was in the job.

SMETANA: *The Bartered Bride—Overture*; The Chicago Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Désiré Defauw. Victor disc 12-0018, price \$1.00.

▲Modern recording in music like this may add to the aural pleasure but it does not necessarily suffice when the interpretation is bettered by a previous issue. In the present case Defauw apparently thinks of this overture solely as a virtuoso piece to exhibit his orchestral prowess. There is not the same finesse that we find in Fiedler's earlier version (Sept. 1940)—the reproduction of which is by no means outdated. In neither record-

ing have the engineers realized to the fullest the effective crescendo of the finale.

—P.H.R.

STRAUSS-DORATI: *Music for the Ballet Graduation Ball*; The Dallas Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Antal Dorati. Victor set DM-1180, four discs, price \$5.00.

▲A pot-pourri of melodies by Johann Strauss arranged by Mr. Dorati for the ballet *Graduation Ball*. Since its original performances in 1940 by the Ballet Russe it is said to rival in popularity the earlier ballet based on Strauss melodies, *Le Beau Danube*. Those who have seen *Graduation Ball* in the theater will recall the colorful effect of the stage pictures set in the Vienna of Strauss. A half hour of this kind of music may seem a bit lengthy to some. However, as Mr. Hall—the annotation reminds us; "With the exception of the *Acceleration Waltz*, the *Perpetuum Mobile* and a brief reference to the *Tritsch-Tratsch Polka*, the score is composed wholly of unfamiliar and completely delightful musical tidbits of the Viennese 'Waltz King'." Further recommendation is not needed for those who revel in Strauss' music. The reproduction is of the best from the Dallas Symphony, and Mr. Dorati, an old hand at ballet music, conducts with unmistakable enthusiasm.

—P.G.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Francesca da Rimini (Symphonic Fantasia)*, Op. 32; The Boston Symphony Orchestra, Serge Koussevitzky, conductor. Victor set DM-1179, three discs, price \$4.00.

▲Tchaikovsky of late has been prominent in the record releases. It is a pity that the composer is not alive to enjoy the royalties which his ardent interpreters are acquiring these days. Victor needed a replacement of the 1940 recording of this work by Barbirolli and the Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra and perhaps no conductor could have realized a more sumptuous performance than Koussevitzky. The superb polish and precision of the Boston Symphony does notable justice to Tchaikovsky's music with the aid of splendid recording. Yet, as an interpretation, Koussevitzky's does not displace the earlier version of Beecham. His poetic tenderness and eloquence, in my estimation, surpasses that of Koussevitzky. The latter however emphasizes the drama in a more real-

istic manner and certainly his performance is more rich-textured with its better reproduction. While I doubt that many would replace the Beecham set, I feel confident those who own the far less compelling performance of Barbirolli will prefer this one.

Tchaikovsky's *Francesca da Rimini*, although one of his best symphonic poems, has never attained the popularity of his *Romeo and Juliet* owing perhaps to its dramatic diffuseness. It is based upon passages from the fifth canto of Dante's *Inferno*. The composer at first intended to write an opera on the subject, but this was abandoned. Dante's poem as well as Dore's illustrations are said to have inspired Tchaikovsky in the shaping of his symphonic fantasia.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Romeo and Juliet*—Overture-Fantasia (5 sides); and **KABALEVSKY:** *Colas Breugnon*—Overture, Op. 24 (1 side); The NBC Symphony Orchestra, Arturo Toscanini, conductor. Victor set DMK1178, three discs, price \$4.00.

▲ I had long hoped that Toscanini would record the Tchaikovsky score, for which he has revealed an unmistakable predilection in recent years. The only departure from the familiar in this interpretation is the conductor's avoidance of rhythmic and dynamic distortions. More than any other conductor, Toscanini coordinates this music. As the late Oscar Thompson once said, "his structures grow organically from bar to bar". The dignity and repose of the opening section is brought out. Throughout the work, the pianissimo sections are beautifully played with a notable clarity which Victor's engineers have happily preserved. The Love Music is delicately songful and the dramatic portions are virile and forceful but not suggestive of elemental passions alien to the subject of the drama. This performance flows with more freedom and certainty than any I know and sustains the composer's intentions in an unforgettable manner. The recording with its brilliant high frequencies is startling realistic and a rival to any so-called high-fidelity heard to date.

Kabalevsky's rowdy, vivacious and blatant overture to his opera, *Colas Breugnon*, is a modern Russian counterpart of Smetana's overture to *The Bartered Bride*, but lacking in the subtlety of the latter. Toscanini gives it a brilliant and energetic work-out.

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WEINBERGER: *Polka and Fugue* from, *Schwanda, the Bagpipe Player*; The Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Dimitri Mitropoulos. Victor disc 12-0019, price \$1.00.

▲Mitropoulos gives an admirable musicianly account of this music yet neither as a performance nor as a recording does this rival or displace the Ormandy-Philadelphia Orchestra version issued in September 1946. In the latter the individual instrumental choirs and the over-all balance is more effectively contrived. In the present disc, the orchestral tone is not always consistently in the foreground.

This brilliant and vital music combines in a witty manner popular melodies with the classical form of the fugue. The Polka, one of the important themes in the opera, is the tune which wins for Schwanda the hearts of the people. The Fugue, heard at the end of act two, occurs when Schwanda plays for the devils in Hades. The composer has fashioned this attractive concert piece in a most ingenious manner, effectively combining the two themes in the finale.

WALDTEUFEL: *Espana*—Waltz, Op. 236; and PIERNE: *Entrance of the Little Fauns* from *Cydalis and the Satyr*; Carnegie Pops Orchestra, conducted by Walter Hendl. Columbia disc 7591-M, price \$1.25.

▲Waldteufel was the director of the court balls during the time of the Empress Eugénie, and regarded by many for a time as a formidable French rival to Johann Strauss. He wrote in all 268 dances. His *Espana* is Spanish melody treated with French 'eau suchre'. The label gives only one excerpt from the Pierne ballet but actually there are two pieces on the record. The *Entrance of the Little Fauns* is an attractive ballet morceau stemming from Massenet with a touch of Debussy. Hendl gives smooth, free flowing performances of these compositions and the reproduction is good.

—P.H.R.

Concertos

BRUCH: *Scottish Fantasy*, Op. 46; Jascha Heifetz (violin) with RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra and Stanley Chaloupa (harp), conducted by William Steinberg. Victor set DV-11, three plastic discs, price \$7.00, or set DM-1183 (shellac), price

\$4.00.

▲Not all who make predictions live to see them come true. The late Donald Francis Tovey, in his *Essays in Musical Analysis*, made quite a few which may materialize, but only the one concerns us at the moment which is relative to this work. Tovey, writing on Bruch's familiar *G minor Concerto*, parenthetically stated that the "two other violin concertos (both in D minor) and the *Scottish Fantasia* need nothing but the attention of violinists to prove as grateful to performers as to the public". His prediction would seem to be justified, for Heifetz—aided by extraordinarily fine recording—plays this attractive treatise, based on Scottish tunes, in a magical manner to beguile the listener and restrain the dissenting critic. The question of whether folk tunes make for enduring appeal in a work as long as this will be one for individual listeners to decide. I would not be inclined to affirm or refute the possibility. Those who like the Bruch *G minor* will unquestionably find his excursion into Scottish folklore an equally gratifying experience, for there is the same expressive suavity and ingratiating writing for the solo instrument. Moreover, the mellifluous harp is added to the mêlée. The formula was made for the approval of the majority not the few.

Bruch has chosen Scottish tunes which lend themselves well to instrumental treatment. Not all of these will be familiar to most, but one—*I'm a Doun for Lack o' Johnnie* (used in the third movement)—might well be revived by some enterprising singer. It is, as David Hall says in his notes, "a folk song of extraordinary and poignant beauty". One of the oldest Scottish songs—*Scots Wha Hae* from the basis of the finale. We know it today by the name of the poem which Burns wrote for an old air but it was sung to several different word settings before Burns, and has been traced back to 1512. Burns was of the opinion that it was originally used by Bruce's army when they marched to the battle of Bannockburn (1312), which would make it a much older melody than most authorities agree. Bruch gives it a luxuriant work-out in this work. Indeed, what Bruch has done with these folk tunes seems to me much more enduring than what many modern composers do with similar material.

—P.H.R.

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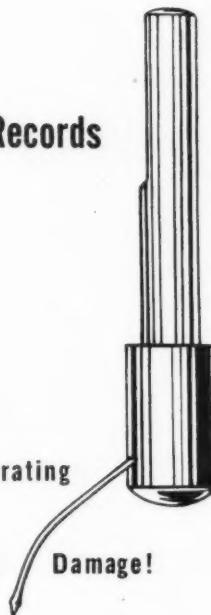
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KHATCHATURIAN: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*; Louis Kaufman and the Santa Monica Symphony, Jacques Rachmanovich, conductor. Concert Hall Unlimited issue, four discs, price \$9.00.

▲This set was supposedly sent to us in December but arrived only recently. This is the second recording of the concerto; the first by the Soviet violinist, David Oistrakh (to whom the work is dedicated), was released in Russia the end of 1942 and in England in March 1943 by Decca. Since 1944, the score has been played many times in American concert halls and one of its main exponents has been Mr. Kaufman. The composer has written a virtuosic work making terrific demands on the soloist. Musically, it is less impressive than the *Piano Concerto* but like the earlier work it aims for ostentation rather than depth of feeling. WRA, writing in *The Gramophone*, hit the nail on the head with his opening lines: "Very lively, attractive, if rather long—nothing to worry anybody: much to please lovers of showy fiddling, if little to hold Brahmins transfixed". The best parts of the score are those using dance-like motives. The opening movement starts favorably but soon bogs down in interest with its repetitive thematic and ornamental display. Anderson aptly stated "the lack of repose in the first and last movements is, I think, a weakness. One can have too much of the *moto perpetuo* style, especially when the ideas are not important". None of the thematic material strikes deeply, but hovers instead on the surface. The slow movement which aims for a more definite mood lacks poetic depth and frequently becomes too doleful and wailing. Yet, it is the best movement of the three. The finale, however, is an electrifying show for the soloist and cannot fail to provoke enthusiastic applause. Here is a case where ostentation is carried off by the virtuosic skill of the violinist. At the end, one is surprised to find the player and the orchestra together.

Mr. Kaufman's performance is admirable in every way. The orchestral direction is competent, but the recording features the violinist and the orchestra is almost consistently submerged. The "generous opportunities" which the score gives to the orchestra's "wind and percussion sections" is not fully

substantiated in the reproduction, which is due to a lack of hall resonance. An example of this is clearly indicated at the opening of the finale where the orchestra is heard alone before the soloist's entrance. However, the recording is brilliant and unquestionably of an extended range. —P.H.R.

Chamber Music

BACH: *Six Sonatas for Harpsichord and Violin*; Ralph Kirkpatrick and Alexander Schneider. Columbia set MM-719, two volumes, fourteen discs, price \$19.20.

▲Most listeners are familiar with these sonatas in modern performance on the violin and piano. Bach wrote them for obbligato clavier and violin, and because of the prevailingly duo-lines of the keyboard instrument they are in reality *sonate en trio*. As I have pointed out previously, the piano's greater sonority and percussive quality is disturbing to the conversational intimacy of Bach's linear writing. The doublings in octaves, realizable on the harpsichord and indicated by Bach in his original manuscripts, cannot be achieved on the piano. As an example of the complete change of character that the piano can bring to a given movement, I cite for those who are interested, the Adagio from the *F minor Sonata*. The devotional and dreamy character of the music is more impressive in the greater clarity of the harpsichord lines.

At least a decade ago, Gamut brought out these six sonatas performed by Boris Schwarz and Alice Ehlers. Despite the stylistic insight of the playing, the tone of the violinist was more often than not rough and aurally unpleasant. It is not alone the more ingratiating quality of Mr. Schneider's tone which gives his performances precedence over the earlier recordings but his more discerning and penetrative artistry. His partner does not always match Miss Ehler's buoyancy in the fast movements but his artistic exactitude and assured control of his instrument are attributes of a highly gifted musician.

Except in the case of the *E major Sonata*, which Landowska and Menuhin recorded recently, comparisons with other performances need not concern us. Landowska is a more

vibrant performer than Kirkpatrick and certainly her harpsichord is better featured, but Menuhin does not have the suavity of Schneider. Moreover, the slightly faster pacing of the quick movements by the present performers better accentuates their rhythmic buoyancy in my estimation. Indeed, the tempi of this team throughout the six works reveals a keenly discerning interpretative insight. The recording in the present set is greatly preferable to the Mozart sonatas which the artists made last year. Although the balance is in favor of the violin, the naturalness of tone and quality of the harpsichord is substantiated.

The first three sonatas are undeniably the best, yet the latter three if suggesting a less effortless workmanship on Bach's part have their cherishable moments. The beautiful Siciliano of the *C minor* is one of Bach's finest inspirations, and remains in the hands of two sterling artists, like the present pair, a compelling work. The Adagio of the *F minor* has already been mentioned. The *G major*, closer to the old suite, has a superbly brilliant and memorable opening allegro.

—P.H.R.

SCHUBERT (arr. Piatigorsky); *Adagio in G minor*; and *Three Minuets* (arr. Piatigorsky); Gregor Piatigorsky (cello) and Ralph Berkowitz (piano). Columbis disc 72373-D, price \$1.25.

▲ The Adagio seems over-sentimental and Mr. Piatigorsky indulges in too much *rubato*. The *Three Minuets* are played more straightforwardly but lacking vibrancy in a cello arrangement. This disc will undoubtedly appeal to the cellist's admirers but others are recommended to hear it before buying. The recording is well balanced and tonally realistic.

—P.G.

Keyboard

BRAHMS: *Fantasien, Op. 116*; Leonard Shure (piano). Vox set 178 (automatic), four 10-inch discs, price \$3.75.

▲ There is more than a suggestion of world weariness in these piano pieces written in Brahms' fifty-ninth year. The Viennese

critic Eduard Hanslick called this opus "a breviary of pessimism". One thinks of the composer ruminating at the keyboard—one minute active intellectually devising difficult technical schemes and the next writing flowing lines or soft chords in which the old heart element is manifest. The fourth of these pieces, the *E major Intermezzo* is one of Brahms' finest piano works in which he reveals considerable subtlety in his chordal writing. The first, *Capriccio in D minor*, has never appealed to me; it is a study in accentuations and coldly intellectual. The *A minor Intermezzo* (No. 2) has a vein of pathos in its opening and closing sections, but there is a detachment to its three sections. The *Capriccio in G minor* (No. 3) has been called a masterpiece of pianoforte sonority which however fails to incite any great interest for me. The *Intermezzo in E minor* (No. 5) with its suggested suspensions is an ingenious little étude. The sixth piece, another *E major Intermezzo*, has an old world charm and might have been a minuet according to one writer. The final piece, *Capriccio in D minor*, owes a debt to Schumann, who would hardly have permitted a similar rhapsodic mood to become so reckless.

Mr. Shure's performances of these pieces reveal him as a highly competent pianist. With a true understanding for Brahms' music and an admirable preoccupation with interpretation rather than technique. In this

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recording, I find the pianist's forte passages somewhat metallic which may or may not be due to the engineering. In the softer passages of the music his tone is always expressive and his pedalling, so important in Brahms, less obtrusive. The surfaces of the records are better than earlier Vox sets.

CHOPIN: *Ballade No. 1 in G minor, Op. 23; Nocturne in F sharp, Op. 15, No. 2;* and **LISZT:** *Au bord d'une Source; Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6;* Vladimir Horowitz (piano). Victor set DM-1165, three discs, price \$4.00.

▲ If Horowitz's artistry is not the most emotionally penetrating, its tonal beauty and technical perfection more often than not has a magic that few can resist. We encounter that magic in his performance of the *G minor Ballade* where he powerfully sets forth "the surge and thunder of the poet" and interprets the softer passages with a delicacy of sentiment that belies the masculinity of his dramatic force. Less persuasive is his rendition of the *F sharp minor Nocturne* which is more impersonally treated, yet the elegance of his interpretation is not wholly invalid to the music.

In the music of Liszt, Horowitz is more compelling. His unmistakable scintillation is eminently suited to the Hungarian Romantic. There is a suggestion of the sun at high-noon shining on the water in this performance of *Au bord d'une source*, from the Swiss book of *Years of Pilgrimage*. There are no purple shadows despite the pianist's observance of pianissimo markings—all is a glittering sheen. One might have expected Horowitz to be more showy in the *Rhapsody*, but only in the final section does he let loose his full powers revealing the phenomenal strength of his left hand and a coordination that is astounding.

Like all of the pianist's recent recordings, this one has a realism which is almost startling. Only in the fortissimo passages does one feel the full power of the executant has been curtailed to prevent blasts. —P.H.R.

CHOPIN: *Etudes, Op. 10 and 25 (complete); Trois Nouvelles Etudes.* Alexander Brailowsky (piano). Victor set DM-1171, eight discs, price \$9.00.

▲ Was it de Pachmann who coined the word Chopinzee? Or Huneker? It is a term not

used too often nowadays. Not that Chopin is in any danger of being neglected, but the importance that once was his in the piano world has somewhat diminished. From Liszt on, Chopin was the bulwark of the pianist. Name any great pianist from Tausig to Bussoni, and you name a great Chopin interpreter. Today, however, specialization being what it is, we have Brahms exponents, and Beethoven exponents and Debussy exponents—and precious few Chopin exponents.

Alexander Brailowsky is one of the last Chopinzees, by self-election, if not altogether universal esteem. He has many times played complete cycles of Chopin's works, and—judging from his New York experiences—is a pianist thought of more highly by the public than the critics. His ideas about tempo, for instance, are highly controversial, his rubato is a constant source of argument among specialists, and there is a nervous quality to his playing which, according to some, does not fit well with his Chopin interpretations.

At any rate, here we have the Chopin etudes—all twenty-seven of them—to study at our leisure in Brailowsky's interpretation. These are among the most-recorded of piano works, although not too many examples remain in the catalogues. Outside of a few miscellaneous single discs, the standard versions are Cortot's of *Op. 10* (his *Op. 25* never was released in this country) and Kilenyi's of *Op. 10* and *Op. 25*. The Lortat and Bacchus versions are sadly outdated.

Around 1940 there were rumors that Brailowsky had recorded these for Victor, and the present set could well have been made at that time. Curiously enough, there is a better quality of recording to *Op. 10* than to *Op. 25*. The former is well-defined in bass and treble; the *Op. 25* has a tendency to shatter on the high notes and reverberate in loud passages. As for the interpretation, it is highly competent but, in my opinion, rather bleak and high-strung. Brailowsky achieves most success in the more brilliant, objective studies, such as the *Etude in F* (*Op. 10, No. 8*) and the "Winter Wind" (*Op. 25, No. 11*). In the more introspective of the series (*Op. 10, No. 6*; *Op. 25, No. 5*) there is a tendency to be stolid and unimaginative. Poetry has not been the outstanding characteristic of Brailowsky's playing in recent years.

The most bothersome feature of his approach, to me, is the lack of dynamic finesse. He seemingly plays only on two levels—fortissimo or mezzo-piano. There are few color effects, few touches of daintiness, little that is light or flexible. Cortot, for instance, has just as much strength, yet in addition responds to the lyricism of the A flat Etude (Op. 10, No. 10) or the E flat in the same book as Brailowsky does not. Cortot also manages works like the E minor Etude with elegance and proportion, whereas Brailowsky merely plays them.

I would not advise anybody to discard the Cortot set in favor of the new one. Rather I would advise keeping them both, for study and comparison. Outside of the fact that this review may be a purely personal and minority report, it is always valuable—especially to the student—to observe how two well-known pianists of opposing mentality and pianistic approach attack these most pianistic of compositions. As for the Kilenyi set, it is not on a level with the Cortot or Brailowsky. There are many individual felicities in this young man's playing, but in

few cases is he able to sustain a mood from beginning to end; he does not have the control that Brailowsky or Cortot has.

One other point: why is it that Brailowsky, who grimly wades through Op. 10 and 25 with determination but no particular finesse, suddenly plays with color and delicacy in the three little etudes that Chopin wrote for the school of Féti and Moscheles? I admit to complete puzzlement. —H.C.S.

CHOPIN: *Fantaisie-Impromptu in C sharp minor, Op. 66; and Nocturne in E Flat, Op. 9, No. 2; Alexander Brailowsky (piano).* Victor disc 12-0015, price \$1.00.

▲There is no great depth to either of these compositions, but both possess a charm which seems to evade Mr. Brailowsky. His absence of sentimentalism evoked a nostalgia which prompted me to replay the recordings of Cortot and Rubinstein. While Brailowsky's technical facility and tonal purity command interest, his lack of warmth leaves something desired. Good recording.

—P.H.R.

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▲Mr. Levant reveals more of an affinity with Debussy's impressionistic style than with Brahms and Chopin, resulting in one of his better albums. The music is well reproduced, but does not challenge the Giesecking, Casadesus or Rubinstein performances, which have more color and subtlety. I doubt if anyone owning the latter records will clamor for Mr. Levant's. —J.N.

A TREASURY OF HARPSICHORD MUSIC: *Prelude, Fugue and Allegro in E flat* (Bach); *Sonatas in D and D minor, Longo 418 and 423* (Scarlatti); *Sarabande in minor* (Chambonnières); *La Dauphine* (Rameau); *Les Barricades mystérieuses* and *L'Arlequin* (Couperin); *Ground in C minor* (Purcell); *The Nightingale* (Anonymous); *The Harmonious Blacksmith* (Handel); *Rondo in D, K. 485, Turkish March* from *Sonata, K. 331* and *Menuetto in D, K. 355* (Mozart); *Concerto in D* (Vivaldi, arr. Bach); Wanda Landowska (harpsichord). Victor set DM-1181, six discs, price \$7.00.

▲A well titled album of rich and varied music written originally for clavier. Mme. Landowska, who has been called the High Priestess of the harpsichord, is an unexcelled virtuoso. Hers is a commanding personality that sustains interest in all she essays. Her rhythmic impulse is so vital that it seems almost uncanny, and it is one of the most satisfying facets of her artistry. It seems to me that Mme. Landowska in recent years has become more brilliant and almost overpowering in her virtuosity. Comparing her recent version of the *Goldberg Variations* with the older one, made many years ago for a Society Issue, I find myself preferring the greater intimacy of the older although it is not nearly as brilliantly recorded. There is a spiritual penetration missing in the newer version. Much of the delicacy of her earlier performances is missing in the later set. The ardor of her temperament seems to have

grown towards a greater radiance in her execution. Her performances of the big Bach work and the Bach-Vivaldi have a patrician grandeur and her technical assurance at all times compels the listener's attention. The modern recording of Landowska's instrument does not appeal to all. It is more resonantly brilliant and it accentuates the plucking of the strings. This realism, however, is not uncharacteristic of what we hear in the concert hall.

The arrangement of the album does not satisfactorily make selection possible between the different works. If you are in the mood for one short piece, another goes with it. However, this is Mme. Landowska's particularly selected show—and what a show it is. For harpsichord music played in the grand manner you can do no better than to turn to this set. —P.H.R.

Voice

BACH: *Magnificat*; The RCA Victor Chorale and Orchestra, Susanne Freil (soprano), Blanche Thebom (mezzo-soprano), Ernice Lawrence (tenor), Paul Matthen (bass), William Vacchiano (first trumpet), Robert Bloom (oboe d'amore), Arthur Lora and Frederick Wilkins (flutes), direction of Robert Shaw. Victor set DM-1182, five 10-inch discs, price \$4.75.

▲A while back an RCA Victor official invited me to attend a recording session of this work, in which the chorus alone participated. Being acquainted with the music, (more particularly the four sections that Gustave Bret of the Bach Society of Paris recorded some decade and a half ago) I was elated to find that after long years a complete performance of this great work would be forthcoming under the alert and efficient direction of Mr. Shaw. There was an unmistakable enthusiasm apparent in the chorus and the orchestra and all were under the spell of the young conductor, whose zeal and devotion for the music of Bach has long been manifest. The hall in use was not a large one, but its live acoustic qualities had been studied and fully ascertained by the Victor engineers. The microphones had been carefully placed to bring out its best properties in the recording. Listening to the finished product, I do not

feel its reproduction could have been bettered.

Bach's *Magnificat* was written shortly after his installation at Leipzig, and according to Parry is "very much like an extended cantata of the Leipzig type". The words are those of the Virgin Mary's Hymn of Praise from the Gospel according to Saint Luke. Parry, while admitting the work to be one of Bach's greatest inspirations, complained that there was no femininity about it. Yet, in the solos for the alto and soprano there is an appropriate gentleness of mood, and certainly in the *Qui rex pexit*, with its dulcet toned oboe d'amore obbligato. The text is divided by Bach into eleven parts. The choral opening and two closing sections are properly festive. The solos are more devotional. The intervening choruses are in similar mood and unquestionably planned for balanced contrast. As, in all music of Bach, one cannot think of a change of plan nor an alteration of mood. Space does not permit a detailed discussion of the different sections. The interested reader is referred to Vol. 5 of Tovey's *Essays in Musical Analysis* for an absorbing study of the score. Appreciation of this music is not contingent on an annotator, for no amount of elucidation can create the spiritual elation which hearing the work gives.

The performance is an appreciable one. I find the conductor a bit too forthright in the opening chorus, and the tempi for the two final choruses is a shade too fast. Bret, who recorded the opening and closing sections, brought a festive dignity to the music that is not similarly maintained here. There is much to be said for the final choruses being heard as a single unit, as in this performance. Bach makes of his *Sicut locutus* a dramatic recitative for the final *Gloria*, and only when the two are heard together can one appreciate fully the potency of his inspiration. Shaw sustains the exultation of the mood even though his faster tempi robs this music of some of its dignity. The soloists are all good, but it is Miss Thebom who remains the most memorable. In both her solos, she captures and conveys the perfect mood. Miss Freil sings nicely and despite her lacking Mlle. Terront's more vibrant feeling (in the older French recording) this version remains more arresting with Robert Bloom's fine playing of the oboe d'amore. The use of

the aria as a slow introduction to the chorus, *Omnis generaciones* has been rightfully cited as "one of the most ingenious and fascinating details of the entire score". I find the tenor rather feeble in the duet with Miss Thebom (*Et misericordia*) but he more than redeems himself in his solo, *Depositum potentes*. In all, this recording is one of which Victor can be justly proud and every devotee of Bach will be grateful that it is available.

BERG: Wozzeck—Excerpts; Janssen Symphony of Los Angeles, Werner Janssen, conductor, with Charlotte Boerner, soprano. Artist Record Set JS-12, two plastic discs, price \$5.00.

▲Of all of Schoenberg's pupils, Alban Berg has proved to be the most articulate. Despite his dissonance there is more of the heart-element in his music than in any other of the atonalists. Virgil Thomson has said of the music of Berg and Schoenberg that it "is complex in manner out of all proportion to the meaning expressed". I would agree with him in Schoenberg's case but not in Berg's. The latter despite his atonal leanings never quite freed himself from the inherent romanticism of the Viennese. His music often suggests Mahler in a new guise. Having heard Mahler's *Fifth Symphony* several times of late, I find this music a logical successor. The story of *Wozzeck* is one of frustration and Berg captures the moods of his characters in a realistic manner. It is this fact which makes his music comprehensible to all who harbor no preconceived notions that dissonance is consistently unpleasant. Here, the distasteful element is not the music but the sordid story.

Considering the importance of *Wozzeck* in the musical advancement of the 20th cen-

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tury, these recordings are of great value to student and teacher as well as the general listener. Mr. Janssen deserves great commendation for making them available. His performance and that of his associate, Miss Boerner, reveals a truly sympathetic insight into the composer's intentions. This is the first album to reach us of the new Artist Record concern (which Mr. Janssen founded), and it has made a most favorable impression both from an interpretative as well as a reproductive aspect. Indeed, as a recording this set measures up the best.

Mr. Janssen has ingeniously arranged the excerpts from *Wozzeck*. I expected a lack of musical continuity but my apprehension was groundless. Beginning with a short interlude in act one which leads into Marie's song by the window as the soldiers pass below in the street, the music skips to the scene in act three where Marie, alone in her room with her child, is reading the Bible and meditating between passages. Here, we have the use of recitative *Sprechstimme* as well as singing. It is a hauntingly moving scene. The next excerpt brings us the concluding pages of act three after Wozzeck's murder of Marie and his own death. The last side of the recording brings us the longest and most important interlude in the opera, in which the composer sums up the tragedy. This leads into the final scene where Marie's child rides his hobby-horse unconcerned with his mother's death.

In the annals of opera, *Wozzeck* is no anomaly but an important opus exploiting a new medium of expression.

—P.H.R.

BERLIOZ: *La Damnation de Faust—D'amour l'ardente flamme*; Rose Bampton (soprano) with RCA Victor Orchestra, conducted by Wilfred Pelletier. Victor disc 12-0015, price \$1.00

▲It is quite some time since Miss Bampton has been heard in a recording. Her choice of Marguerite's lovely aria from Berlioz's *Damnation of Faust* should prove welcome for it is no longer available in the domestic catalogue since the withdrawal of the fine recording by Yvonne Gall. This aria occurs at the opening of the fourth act. The scene is in Marguerite's chamber where she is seated at a spinning-wheel, despairing, hoping. This is a love song of anguish in which Marguerite recalls her lordly lover and yearns

for his return. It is the French counterpart of Schubert's *Gretchen am Spinnrade* in which the composer echoes the plaintive quality of the melody in the orchestra rather than depicting the spinning-wheel.

Miss Bampton is always a dependable and true artist. There is beauty of tone in much of her singing but not always the ease that one might like. Although one can imagine a more emotionally ardent Marguerite, Miss Bampton's artistic intelligence and musicianship is captivating. Her husband, Mr. Pelletier, conducts with sympathetic insight.

—J.N.

TODD DUNCAN RECITAL: *The Song of the Flea* (Moussorgsky); *In the Silence of the Night* (Rachmaninoff); *Oh Bess, Where's my Bess* and *I Got Plenty of Nuttin'* from *Porgy and Bess* (Gershwin); *Waters of Tralee* (Prentice); *Omima* (Haitian Song); *Ole Man River* from *Show Boat* (Kern); *Everytime I Feel the Spirit* (Spiritual); Todd Duncan (baritone) with William Allen at the piano. Musicraft set 82, four 10-inch discs, price \$3.75.

▲The once unknown Negro professor of music, whom Gershwin selected as his Porgy, has become a much admired concert artist in recent years. Last fall, he returned from a successful tour of Australia and New Zealand and at present is on tour in England, Holland, Belgium, Italy and Sweden. Todd possesses an opulently resonant voice and a very definitely ingratiating personality. His artistry is forthright, earnest and sincere. Perhaps he is a little too serious on occasion but he allows himself few liberties. If he does not efface memories of Chaliapin in Moussorgsky's *The Flea*, he gives a better performance than many of the Russian basso's imitator. His diction is excellent and for those who like their songs in English, this version of *The Flea* will appeal. The familiar Rachmaninoff song is sung with expressive manliness and no lingering on sentiment. Todd needs no introduction to most of us in *Porgy and Bess*, both songs he sings are in the first Decca set of the opera. His rendition of *Ole Man River* is so well sung, one wishes that an orchestral accompaniment were present. *Omimba* is one of the baritone's concert favorites—a Haitian folk song with tom-tom accompaniment. *Waters of Tralee* is a typical British ballad, written by a Scottish friend of the singer. The

spiritual is an appropriate finale to a well-planned recital for popular consumption. The piano accompaniments of Mr. Allen are praiseworthy, and also the recording.

FIBICH-SCOTTI: *My Moonlight Madonna*; and **RODGERS:** *It's a Grand Night for Singing*; Helen Traubel (soprano) with Orchestra, conducted by Charles O'Connell. Columbia 10-inch disc 1751-D, price \$1.00.

▲Bruennhilde invades Broadway and proves herself captivating in the ballad *My Moonlight Madonna*, based on Fibich's *Poeme*. On the other hand, her voice seems a bit heavy for the Rodger's song which needs more buoyancy and lilt than she summons.

FRENCH OPERA ARIAS: *Faust*—(Act 1) *Salut' o mon dernier matin*, and (Act III) *Cavatina* (Gounod); *Lakme*—*Fantasia aux divin mensonges* (Delibes); *Werther*—*Lorque l'enfant* (Massenet); *Des Pecheurs de Perles*—*De mon amie*; Giuseppe Lugo (tenor) with Orchestra. Vox 10-inch set, three discs, price

▲These recordings, originally made by French Polydor prior to the war, are of the non-resonant, studio variety. The singer was well known at the Opéra Comique in Paris in the 1930s, where he sang the principal roles of the Italian repertoire in the French language. Lugo possesses a fine natural tenor voice which he uses with ease from his lowest notes to his high C in the *Salut, de meure* from *Faust*, but his lack of subtlety and often white upper tones leave much to be desired. In these recordings he suggests little histrionic ability. Instead he seems to rely solely on his youthful exuberance. A more resonant type of reproduction would have enhanced the best qualities of the tenor's voice.

GRUBER: *Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht*; and **TRADITIONAL:** *O Come, All Ye Faithful*; Lotte Lehmann (soprano) with RCA Victor Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Richard Lert. Victor 10-inch disc 10-1367, price 75c.

GRUBER: *Silent Night*; and **TRADITIONAL:** *O Come All Ye Faithful*; James Melton (tenor) with RCA Victor Orchestra, conducted by Frank Black. Victor 10-inch disc 10-1356, price 75c.

▲Lotte Lehmann sings one verse of *Silent Night* in German and two in English. There is a richly mature expressiveness in the noted soprano's renditions of both compositions. The orchestral accompaniments are simple and unostentatious.

Mr. Melton sings *Silent Night* in English and *O Come, All Ye Faithful* in English and Latin. There is a healthy fervor to Mr. Melton's interpretations but the orchestral arrangements by Mr. Black, with traditional radio use of bells, seems somewhat pretentious. For my own part, I prefer the Lehmann disc. The recording in both is excellent.

ARR. JAROFF: *Song About Lieutenant Chikchiroff*, and *Song About Pakhom*; The Don Cossack Chorus, conducted by Serge Jaroff. Columbia 10-inch disc 4503-M, price \$1.00.

▲The brilliant ensemble work of this chorus is too familiar to require comment. Their performances of these selections are effectively contrived. The only drawback for full enjoyment is a lack of knowledge of the Russian language. I would like to know the

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facts about Lt. Chikchiroff and Pakhom—what they did, said, and how they acted. The *Song About Pakhom* is described as slyly amusing but its humor is lost to me. It would be helpful if Columbia provided a leaflet with a translation of the words with the records of this chorus. I wager sales figures would mount.

THE MINSTREL BOY: *The Minstrel Boy* (Moore); *When Irish Eyes Are Smiling* (Ball); *The Rose of Tralee* (Glover); *A Little Bit of Heaven* (Ball); *The Palatine's Daughter* (Sargent); *A Ballynure Ballad* (Traditional); *The Garden Where the Praties Grow* (Traditional); *The Young May Moon* (Moore); *You'd Better Ask Me* (Lohr); Christopher Lynch (tenor), with J. Wummer (flute), Leonard Rose (cello), and Laura Newell (harp). (Arrangements by Norman Lockwood.) Columbia 10-inch set MM-722, price \$5.00.

▲Mr. Lynch definitely projects more personality in these recordings than in any previously heard. His light, sweet tenor voice is heard at its best. No one needs a book of words with this singer—his diction is perfect. Stylistically, Mr. Lynch is at his best in the traditional ballads, and I, for one, cannot help but wish he had made a complete album of these. In the familiar pseudo Irish songs of Ball and others, he inclines to be a bit over-sentimental and in all of the songs he indulges in excessive ritards and frequently breaks his rhythm. The instrumental backgrounds are effectively contrived and well played. Recording is pleasantly natural.

OLD IRISH AIR (arr. Weatherly); *Danny Boy*; and **TRADITIONAL:** *Flow Gently, Sweet Afton*; Thomas L. Thomas (baritone) with Jacob Hennemann at the piano. Victor 10-inch disc 10-1312, price 75c.

▲I like the singer best in *Danny Boy* although his interpretation seems a bit studied. There is a manly tenderness in the Scotch song but the melody should flow a little more freely without separation of the word Afton in the rising line at the end of each verse. Mr. Thomas is a little too careful in his diction for the good of the music's flow, yet few would deny that his singing is appealing.

SEASONAL HYMNS, CAROLS AND CHORALES: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (French, Mode I); *Wake, Awake, For Night Is Flying* (Nicolai-Bach); *Come, Ye Thankful People* (Elvery); *Now Thank We All Our God* (Mendelssohn); *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen* (Old English); *There Came an Angel Down from Heaven* (Broeckx); *Joy To the World* (Handel); *Angels We Have Heard on High* (Old French Noël); *Break Thou the Bread of Life* (Sherwin); *O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee* (Smith); *Dear Lord and Father of Mankind* (Maker); *O Lamb of God, Still Keep Me* (Maker); *In the Cross of Christ I Glory* (Conkey); *All Glory, Laud, and Honor* (Teschner); *Jesus Christ Is Risen Today*; St. Luke's Choristers with Orchestra in part—William Ripley Dorr, conductor. Capitol 10-inch set No. BD-45, four discs, price \$2.75.

▲Mr. Dorr's excellent training of this choir has resulted in one of the best groups of its kind to be heard on records. This is the fourth album which Capitol has issued. Its contents is a varied one presenting music of different seasons of the Christian year. It is unfortunate that owing to our freak weather in the east that this set, intended for the Christmas trade, was not received in time for review in our December issue. However, those who enjoy music of this kind will find its appeal is not contingent on the calendar.

VERDI: *La Traviata*—*Addio del passato*; and **BIZET:** *Carmen*—*Michaela's Air*; Licia Albanese (soprano) with RCA Victor Orchestra, conducted by Frieder Weissmann and Erich Leinsdorf. Victor disc 12-0014, price \$1.00.

▲Miss Albanese is one of the most appealing interpreters of Violetta now among us. Hers is a warmly human portrayal with a stylistic refinement that gives it charm. There are many niceties of subtle inflection in her handling of the text which makes up for the lack of vocal brilliance and ease in some parts of the score. Her reading of the letter in this record is moving and her singing of the aria remains for the most part tonally lovely and dramatically persuasive. If, in this scene, she does not efface memories of Muzio, she does command respect and

admiration for her own artistry. Like other sopranos before her, she evidently finds it difficult to end the aria softly. Verdi imposed a task which not all can successfully meet. The *forte* ending is not incompatible with the text and many a singer finds it easier to dramatize Violetta's despair, for surely it conforms with the words "all is finished".

The *Carmen* aria comes from the Victor set issued in December 1946. Mr. Miller in his review pointed out that the soprano seems less at home in French than Italian opera and her singing while artistically admirable falls short of the ideal performance. The recording in both cases is excellent.

VERDI: *Il Trovatore*—Recitative and Aria—*Il Balen suo sorriso*, and Recitative and Aria—*Per me ora fatale* and *Nun's Chorus*; Leonard Warren (baritone) with RCA Victor Chorale and Orchestra, conducted by Jean Paul Morel. Victor disc 11-9956, price \$1.00.

▲This record gives us the first half of the second scene in Act 2 before the mountain convent to which Leonora has fled. The Count arrives to abduct Leonora before she has taken her vows. In the latter half, she is rescued by Manrico. With the Count are Fernando and his followers to whom he imparts his intentions. An unnamed singer takes Fernando's part.

Mr. Warren's rich and glowing voice is effectively employed in this music. How wisely he observes Verdi's dynamic markings shunning opportunities that others take to exploit vocal brilliance. All too few Italian-born singers ignore pianissimo, although most make more of the text than Warren does. However, I find myself admiring this singer despite the tenebrous quality of his upper tones. The whole scene is exceptionally well done and not the least of its effectiveness is due to Mr. Morel's excellent conducting. The recording is realistic.

—J.N.

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In The Popular Vein

By Enzio Archetti

People Are Funnier than Anybody, and My Old Flame; Spike Jones and His City Slickers. Victor 20-2592.

● Delightful nonsense! The imitation of Peter Lorre in *My Old Flame* is very realistic. I hear that people have asked for this record at stores as a Peter Lorre's recording rather than Spike Jones'.

I Wanna and Soprano Boogie; Victor 20-2179. *Dardanella and Rainbow Mood*; Victor 20-2274.

The Herbie Fields Quintet (Personnel: Herbie Fields, clarinet and soprano sax; Joseph Gatto, piano; Martin Brown, bass; Rudolph Cafaro, guitar; Stanley Kay, drums).

● Good rhythm and good instrumental work on everybody's part but not much real jazz — the men never seem to get below the surface. Worth investigating to learn what the English can do with our jazz idiom. All except *Dardanella* are Herbie Fields compositions.

Fun and Fancy Free and *I'll Never Make the Same Mistake Again*; Gene Krupa and His Orchestra. Vocals by Buddy Hughes. Columbia 37875.

● This should have been labeled "Buddy Hughes, with accompaniment by Gene Krupa and his Orchestra." Personally, I can do with a minimum of Buddy. A very mediocre disc for all concerned.

Shangri-La (Robert Maxwell — Matty Malneck) — 2 parts; Matty Malneck and His Orchestra, with Robert Maxwell, harpist. Columbia 37877.

● An ambitious suite for harp and orchestra, in which jazz and dance themes are alternated with mood music of a more serious caste. The effect is novel, and worth hearing. I commented earlier on Maxwell's playing. The good impression is sustained here. Without favoring his harp, Columbia has given him a well-balanced recording with the orchestra.

The Last Round Up and A Hundred and Sixty Acres; Victor 20-2569. *Cigarettes, Whisky, and Wild, Wild Women and My Best To You*; Victor 20-2199. *You Never Miss the Water Till the Well Runs Dry and Will There Be Sagebrush In Heaven*; Victor 20-2350. All by the Sons of the Pioneers.

● This is by far one of the best cowboy groups recording today. They have a style and it sounds genuinely Western. This program of songs is representative of their best work. *Last Round Up* comes off best because it is a better song, but *Cigarettes, Whisky, and Wild, Wild Women* is a good one in comedy vein. Victor's engineers have done right by these boys. *Loaded Piols, Loaded Dice and Now You've Gone and Hurt My Southern Pride*; Victor 20-2575. *Smoke, Smoke, Smoke and Crawdad Song*; Victor 20-2370. Phil Harris and His Orchestra.

● Typical Harris stuff. Harris, *Smoke* is really good. The other are just fair. Good recording on all.

Intermezzo (Provost) and *Laura*; Capitol 15012. *In A Lazy Mood* and *A Trout, No Doubt*; Capitol 425. Paul Weston and His Orchestra.

● These two Westons couldn't possibly be any more different. The first is all meltingly sentimental and orchestral. The second is good solid jazz, orchestral and vocal. Matt Dennis does the singing and the instrumental is by Eddie Miller on tenor sax. The second disc is a must, but yield to that temptation if you like the first. It is melodic and very well recorded. *I Hate To Lose You and They're Mine, They're Mine, They're Mine*; Victor 20-2583. *It's Kind of Lonesome Out Tonight and Oh! What I Know About You*; Victor 20-2558. *Swing and Sway With Sammy Kaye*. Vocals by Don Cornell, Laura Lesslie, Your Sunday Serenade Sweetheart, and The Kaydets.

● Smooth performances. Good for dancing. *It's Kind of Lonesome* is an Ellington composition but, of course, here it is played as Sammy Kaye feels it, not Ellington.

I Feel So Smoothie and What'll I Do; Capitol 15019. *Those Things Money Can't Buy and Now He Tells Me*; Capitol 15011. The King Cole Trio.

● Typical K.C.T.'s. You have to be a rabid fan to want everything they do, but if you are not a fan, you won't go wrong if you choose either of these discs.

Don't You Know That I Care? (Ellington), and *No One Else Will Do*; Beryl Davis, vocal, with Stephane Grappelli and His Quartet, featuring George Shearing, piano. London 101.

Lover Man, and Down At the Old Bull and Bush; Anne Shelton, vocal, with Harry Roy and His Band. London 102.

Eili, Eili and My Yiddishe Momme; Anne Shelton, vocal, with Music by Camarata. London 103.

It's the Bluest Kind of Blues My Baby Sings, and Make-Believe World; Denny Dennis, vocal, with Stanley Black and His Orchestra. London 104.

How Lucky You Are, and When Your Hair Has Turned To Silver; Vera Lynn, vocal, with Ambrose and His Orchestra. London 107.

Dance of the Potted Puppets and Swing Low, Sweet Clarinet; Ambrose and His Orchestra. Clarinet soloists: Regineld Kell and Carl Barritteau. London 108.

For Once In Your Life, and How Deep Is the Ocean? Anne Shelton, vocal, with Stanley Black and His Orchestra and Music by Camarata. London 109.

Night and Day, and La Mer; Montovani and His Orchestra. London 111.

● These are the first London releases to reach me. They are made in England by Decca and released here through The London Gramophone Corporation, in New York City. Their technical quality is remarkable. Artistically, too, they rate superlatives.

Beryl Davis has a sympathetic voice and style. Backed by Stephane Grappelli and his

group of Hot Club of France fame, the result is first class listening. Anne Shelton also has a good voice — not unlike Dinah Shore's at her best. Her choice of material shows she's not in a rut. The real surprise in this lot is *Elli*, *Elli* sung in English with feeling and understanding worthy of a concert artist. The accompaniment given by Camarata is perfect. Denny Dennis is a new vocal menace who will give Frank Sinatra, Tony Martin, Mel Tormé, et al, a run for their money. His blues are good ones. The Ambrose record is first-rate. Isn't there more than a passing resemblance between *The Whiffenpoof Song* and *When Your Hair Has Turned To Silver*? One of the big surprises in this lot is the name of Reginald Kell, of symphony and chamber music fame, playing jazz like a Benny Goodman. He doesn't try to swing it, but lets his smooth style speak for itself. The Montovani is in dinner music style. *La Mer* is not Debussy's but Trenet's. On the whole, a very propitious introduction for a new brand in an already well covered field. London is here to stay.

Sigmund Romberg; Lois Butler, soprano, and Lee Sweetland, baritone, with Paul Weston and His Orchestra. Capitol Album CD-61, 4-10" discs.

● Romberg is certainly one of the best represented operetta composers in any company's catalog. Deservedly, too, because he can always be depended upon for a tuneful time. Some of his best known operettas are represented in this set. *The Desert Song* with *Romance*, *The Desert Song*, and *The Riff Song*; *Maytime* with *Will You Remember?*; *The New Moon* with *Wanting You*, *Lover Come Back To Me*, and *One Kiss*; and *The Student Prince* with *Deep In My Heart*, *Dear*. There are both solos and duets. The singers are well known on the stage and radio. Lois Butler has a small, sweet voice which reminds one of Snow White's in the Walt Disney picture. Sweetland's baritone is low and full, almost too mature sounding, at times, for some of these romantic bits but very virile for such things as the *Riff* and *Desert* songs. The chorus is absent and missed, but the orchestra lends good support. The recording is clean and forward.

Serenade of the Bells, and *The Gentleman Is A Dope* (from *Allegro*); Jo Stafford with Paul Weston and His Orchestra. Capitol 15007.

● *Serenade*, a lush, sentimental song, is lushly done by the warm-voiced Jo Stafford. The *Allegro* excerpt, pert and direct, is nicely sung, accompanied, and recorded.

Pass That Peace Pipe, and *Let's Be Sweethearts Again*; Margaret Whiting, with the Crew Chiefs, and Frank De Vol and His Orchestra. Capitol 15010.

● The imitation Indian number from the picture *Good News* is done with pep and humor. The flipover is too sentimental. Margaret Whiting has a way with both numbers. Pleasant listening. Spacious recording.

Don't You Love Me Anymore, and *When I Write My Song*; Victor 20-2473.

When the White Roses Bloom In Red River

Valley, and *All My Love*; Victor 20-2376. *On the Santa Claus Express*, and *Hora Staccato* (Dinicu); Victor 20-2476. Freddy Martin and His Orchestra. Vocals by Stuart Wade, Clyde Rogers, and The Martin Men. Soloist in *Hora Staccato*: Gene Conklin.

● As usual, Freddy Martin is tampering with the classics. *When I Write My Song* is *Mon cœur* from *Samson et Dalila*. Neither singing nor arrangement will efface the original. Saint-Saëns gets no label credit. The Dinicu, while not a classic, is almost one in its field. Substitution of a whistler for a violinist is a novelty but the arrangement is no improvement on the original. *When the White Roses* is a hill-billy which loses its character in waltz treatment. Only in the remaining numbers, compositions of the day, does Martin show any character and originality. Prominent piano parts do much to bolster the interest.

Sweetheart Serenade, and *Who Were You Kiss-ing*; The Three Suns. Vocal by Artie Dunn. Victor 20-2567.

● The Three Suns are now typed and every new record is expected more or less to be another *Peg 'O My Heart*. They don't quite make the mark with this one.

Ave Maria (Gounod), and *White Christmas* (Berlin); Phil Brito, with Vocal Ensemble, and Ted Dale and His Orchestra. Musicraft 517.

● A very unusual combination for Phil Brito which is surprisingly good. It wouldn't surprise me if this disc rivaled Bing's of these selections. The *Ave Maria* is a bit theatrical. *White Christmas* is fine. Recommended for those who like the music.

I Met My Baby In Macy's, and *The Whistler Song*; Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra. Vocal by Gordon Polk. Victor 20-2522.

● This one is made for the juke boxes. While not outstanding, it has pep and rhythm. Also, a few good choruses on trombone, sax, and trumpet in *The Whistler Song*. Incidentally, this one is based on the theme used to identify the Whistler on the radio mystery sketch of that name. A touch of humor is added when the whistler's whistle goes dry toward the end of the record and the vocalist giggles. The recording has third dimension.

Made For Each Other, and *Rhumba Fantasy*; Xavier Cugat and His Orchestra. Vocal by Buddy Clark. Columbia 37939.

Un Poguito De Amor, and *I Love To Dance* (both from *This Time For Keeps*); Desi Arnez and His Orchestra. Vocals by Desi Arnez and Carol Richards. Victor 20-2499.

● Latin rhythms by two masters. When played together, Cugat's superiority is plainly evident but that isn't to say that Desi hasn't something of his own on the ball. Arnez is more forward with his rhythm; Cugat is more subtle.

The *Rhumba Fantasy*, based on a theme from Rimsky-Korsakov's *Capriccio Espagnol*, is not too incongruous. Both records make very good listening — and probably very good dancing.

I'll Dance At Your Wedding, and *Carolina In the Morning*; Tony Martin, with Earle Hagen and His Orchestra. Victor 20-2512.

● A very good Tony Martin. *Carolina* is an oldie, very smoothly done in this present version. Don't pass it up without a listen. The recording is good.

Do Ya Or Don'tcha? and *Saddle Serenade*; Roy Rogers, with County Washburne and His Orchestra. Victor 20-2437.

The Last Mile, and *Leaf of Love*; Gene Autry, with String Band Accompaniment. Columbia 37816.

● The kids' two favorite singing cowboys. When compared like this, Roy Rogers comes up with a better voice but Gene Autry seems to have the best style. *Saddle Serenade* is a typical cowboy song, not too original. The reverse is a Spade Cooley work therefore it is not surprising that it is jazzier. Autry's selections are more hill-billy than Western. *The Last Mile* definitely derives from *Birmingham Jail*. If you must choose, plunk on the Roy Rogers. But your kid will probably want them both.

Boulevard of Memories, and . . . and *Mimi*; Musicraft 15114.

Magic Town, and *The Best Things In Life Are Free*; Musicraft 15118. Mel Torme, with Orchestra.

● I find it hard to accept Mel Torme's voice and style. But these discs have one thing in their flavor: they are done softly, smoothly, intimately.

Gustav Mahler

(Continued from page 174)

major to D flat, ending in D flat. The symphony is long from the very nature of its material. Objection to a Mahler or any other symphony because it is long is like objection to an oak tree because it takes years and years to grow. We may, if we choose, think that Mahler's material in the Ninth symphony is not interesting enough or put together arrestingly enough to cover the expansive canvas; but it is irrelevant to object to length and duration. A listener is free to tell a composer he doesn't like a 'long' work; the composer is also at liberty to retort that he doesn't like a listener with a short music-sense.

The material of the Ninth symphony of Mahler is not inadequate for the spacious plan laid down in the first movement, which presses forward at once to the finale. The work, as a fact, is the most engrossing symphony of the last half-century; the first movement is one of the greatest movements

since Beethoven's Ninth; I do not know a greater, not even the first movement of Brahms's First and Fourth. Out of the sloshing chord of the 'Das Lied von der Erde' the theme of this first movement is born. Mahler sums up the style and technique — the rationale — of first-movement form once and for all. After this movement, there was nothing left for other composers except to pour their material into the finally developed mould. The main and long opening theme or episode suggests a cradle song which is enlarged gradually to a mature man's review of his life; then the movement is transformed to a march macabre; the crisis at the section marked 'Mit hochster Gewalt', where there is a sudden pedal-point, with trombones and tuba sounding a summons, while a bass-drum or tamtam beats a rhythm based on the movement's fundamental intervals, and muted trumpets blow mysterious fanfares; this passage has few equals in symphonic music as a moving and original expression of a last and braced-up facing of one's destiny; the whole movement, indeed, is an epilogue to a life lived for music. Mahler must, of course, write his own obituary. There is another magnificent stroke, when the trumpet motif — a Fate motif obviously — is resolved to the haunting horn melody which beckons to the sentimental coda, with the solo violin swooning its portamento in a misty nocturne of harp and flute; another and the very last example of the Mahler contradiction; the material is passé, but by his individual style and power of musical thought and feeling he puts the coping-stone on the romantic and baroque symphonic edifice. In the second and third movements, especially in the rondo burleske, he even approaches a mockery of his own curiously mixed bucolic and cosmopolitan flavours. Not often is the romantic gesture combined with Mahler's sharpness of intellect; the actor in him remained to the end.

Something is wrong with our critical values if we allow Mahler to drop into the limbo of things taken for granted, simply because at some time or other a phrase or label was applied to him during a momentary 'reaction'. I find him perpetually interesting as a problem of aesthetic psychology; as a maker of music I see him as a shell left on the shore of his century's romanticism, a shell in which we can hear the sound of a withdrawing sea.

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